

BALLET

TODAY

1/3^d



SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

JUNE 1956

LES PATINEURS



FULL CYCLE

TWO critics sat talking before the curtain went up on Svetlana Beriosova's first Giselle. One said to the other "I wonder what Beriosova will make of this." "I wonder" came the reply, adding doubtfully "there are very few good Giselle's." After the first Act: "Good, very good" said the first critic "Yes . . ." said the second (still cautious) "but Act 1 is not Act 2." After Act 2. "Very, very good" came the verdict from our two friends, and the second critic added magnanimously "no wonder they keep Giselle in the repertoire, it is a lovely ballet".

In Svetlana's dressing room afterwards: "Tonight," said Svetlana, thanking her admirers for their congratulations, "is only the beginning—of a lot of hard work. I must work very hard to perfect this role".

A GLIMPSE OF CARON

ABOVE is a shot from the M.G.M. film *Gaby* which will be generally released on August 20. Taken from the play *Waterloo Bridge*, this film tells the story of a French dancer, Gaby, (Leslie Caron) dancing in the Continental Ballet at Covent Garden during the war.

Also in the corps de ballet is Elsa, her room-mate (Taina Elg). Although we only get brief glimpses of Caron's dancing, her many admirers will enjoy seeing her once again, in this delightful romance in which she co-stars with John Kerr.

AWARD

GYULA Harangozó, choreographer and dancer, has been awarded the Kossuth Prize for his presentation of, and performance in, Hungarian and foreign ballets. He is now working on the choreography of Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*.

Ballet Today

No. 6.

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Cover Portrait:

BRENDA BOLTON AND SARA NEIL

of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet

in

Les Patineurs.

Photo: - - - - - Mike Davis

Editor—Estelle Herf

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BALLET TODAY is published monthly by I. E. Herf from 15, Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey (Telephone: Elmbridge 9743) to which all Editorial, advertising and other communications should be addressed.

*Subscription Rate: Inland 15/- per annum.
Overseas 17/6d.*

Single copies 1/3d. monthly, post 3d. extra.

Remittances from abroad must be made payable in England.

NEW SOCIETY

THE British Dance Notation Society is a new non-profit making organisation formed for the purpose of bringing together all people working in this field, regardless of what system of Notation they use. Among those who have distinguished themselves in Dance Notation, the following have been offered and accepted Honorary membership of the Society: Rudolf Laban, Lisa Ullmann, Ann Hutchinson, Sigurd Leeder and Margaret Morris. Mr. Harry Haythorne has been appointed Chairman. Several lectures have already been given, and there will be two further lectures during June and July. Details of membership can be obtained from the Society (by letter) to 109, Belgrave Road, London, S.W.1.

FINISHING COURSE

A THREE months' finishing course to include audition routine, songs, speeches, beauty culture, manicure, photographic and garment modelling, film and television technique, speech, letter writing and social etiquette, contract and legal knowledge required by an artist, is to commence in September for students over the age of 15 years. The aim of the Arts Association of Stage Schools, who are running this Course in London is to encourage each girl to see herself as an individual personality, a "Star", and to add to the knowledge of her art the experience, polish, and ability to present herself to the best advantage when being auditioned. Students will have an opportunity of fulfilling film and television engagements during the course, and will be given their first theatrical engagement at the completion. Further details from the Association at: Coventry House, Coventry Street, London, W.1.

Printed by Richard Madley Ltd., 54 Grafton Way, W.1, England. SOLE AGENTS Australasia: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch Ltd; South Africa: Central News Agency Ltd. Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland: Messrs. Kingstons Ltd.

BACK

STAGE

SUMMER SCHOOL

THE Association of Ballet Clubs found their Summer School such a success last year that they are arranging a similar week this year—from the 1st to 8th September. Ringwood Grammar School, Bournemouth, has been booked, and once again **Madame Lydia Kyasht** will be taking classes daily. During the week there will be Lectures, Film shows and other attractions. The fee for the week, which includes full board, lodging, classes, lectures, etc. will be eight guineas. Further details or bookings can be obtained from **Mr. L. A. Fortune**, 75, Old Park View, Enfield. Early application is advised.

ON OR UNDER THE DESK?

LETTER of the month.—“Please could you let me have information and pictures of **Anton Dolin**, as I am studying him at school.” Obviously the curriculum has widened since my days, but I cannot imagine which section he would come under, even at a ballet school, seeing the writer is female.

BIRTHDAY PARTY

SATURDAY, 5th May, was not just another night at the ballet. To those fortunate enough to be present it was a birthday party—to celebrate the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the first full night of ballet given by the Company at the Old Vic on 5th May, 1931. And the party spirit continued throughout the evening when **Robert Helpmann**, in response to the rapturous welcome from the audience, summed it all up with “I could not have returned to dancing tonight if I had felt you were an audience, I am back with my friends, otherwise I could not have stuck my neck out”. That was the spirit which came over the footlights. They were all there—famous names from the early days, now no longer actively engaged in ballet—and the seven

ballerinas—all to give of their best because it was a party and they wanted to please their hostess, **Dame Ninette de Valois**. When the final curtain had fallen on the last ballet and the entire Company assembled on stage **Dame Ninette** paid tribute to those who had made it possible to be holding such a party in such a setting, and when **Frederick Ashton** replied to this and presented **Dame Ninette** with a clock “from those in the gods” we all felt acutely conscious that we had come along without our own presents. It was inevitable of course that the audience should conclude the evening with singing *happy birthday to you*.

SHORT OF COPY—

I ALWAYS imagine that the best phrases are cut out from a newspaperman's report when he telephones his copy through to his newspaper office, but one Sunday newspaper really must have applied the blue pencil. Not a mention of the exciting performance at Sadler's Wells Twenty-Fifth Anniversary was made, but we made frontpage news. Readers were told “it was so warm at the ballet men had to take their coats off”. Why not give a weather report at all big events, we are sure it would go down well with fight and football fans.

SHOES AND BALLETS

DOMENICO Di Salvo, who was making ballet shoes for **Markova** when she was fourteen years of age, needs no introduction in this capacity, his shoes are known the world over. What is not known however is the fact that he makes shoes by day and composes ballets by night. He has just shewn me his latest one act composition *The Landscape Painter*, complete with

music, which runs for twenty minutes, and is the story of a painter who wishes to paint a Goddess. **Mr. Di Salvo** has composed nine ballets in all, and hopes one day they will be produced.

He has been making ballet shoes for over thirty years, and it was quite by chance that he embarked on this as a career. He left Paris in 1910 to come to England to learn English, as he was then studying to be a restaurateur. At the outbreak of war he joined the Italian army and was wounded. On resuming civilian life he found his disability made it impossible for him to do work which necessitated a lot of standing. Returning to England he mentioned his predicament to **Gladys Dillon**, who was then ballet-mistress of the Winter Garden Theatre. She advised him to import Italian ballet shoes to England, as ballet was then beginning to become popular in this country. He imported them for a while and then, as he says, learned to make them himself—the hard way. A photograph of the decor of *The Landscape Painter* is shewn on this page.

CLUB DEBUT

ENFIELD Ballet Club made its debut at the Enfield Technical College during April. Readers of **BALLET TODAY** will remember we gave details of the commencement of this Club some months ago. **Mr. Fortune**, the Chairman, tells me they now have about twenty dancing members and sixty non-dancing members. Ballet mistress is **Marie Balinska** who was originally with the International Ballet. The evening's programme included the Greek National Dance group, **Noreen Sopwith** and **David Poole** from Ballet Rambert, and

the Hilde Holger School of Modern Ballet. **Lady Crosfield** runs the Greek Choral and Dance Society, whose principal dancer **Mimika Martaki** is the wife of an Enfield doctor. They met in Greece during the War when she was in the Greek Theatre and he was a naval surgeon.

BRAVO NERINA

ON July 2nd **Nadia Nerina** and her partner, **Alexis Rassiné** will commence a four-week tour of English towns on the lines of their two successful tours of South Africa.

The programme entitled, “Ballet Highlights” will consist of famous classical solos and pas de deux as well as dances specially choreographed for their current Saturday Night Television series. **Miss Nerina** and **Mr. Rassiné** will dance six nights per week with three changes of programme.

The dancers will be accompanied on two pianos by **Cyril Preedy** and **Colin Kingsley** who will also be featured in piano interludes.

Towns to be visited are Oxford, Liverpool, Leeds and Manchester.

Here is your chance to see one of Sadler's Wells brilliant ballerinas. So many readers write to me saying how they would like to have this opportunity. Well here it is! Don't miss it.

REBUILDING FUND

THE Phoenix Ballet Group are to present a new programme at Gateshead Little Theatre in June in aid of the Peoples' Theatre Rebuilding Fund.

STOP PRESS

VIOLETTA Elvin is leaving Sadler's Wells Ballet to get married when the season ends at Covent Garden on 23rd June.



"THE LANDSCAPE PAINTER"
Rhapsody Ballet in one act.
BY
DON DI SALVO.

A. V. COTON

Anya Linden
in *Cinderella*



Svetlana Beriosova
in *Swan Lake*



25th Anniversary



Les Ballets de Paris



LONDON

THE pattern of ballet offerings in London in recent weeks may be taken as what could occur if there should be—highly desirably in some people's estimation—one company, and one company only. Between the visits of the Ballets Africains and the Ballets de Roland Petit the only ballet on view was at Covent Garden, where the programmes faithfully echoed what has often been mentioned as the company's official policy. That is: an emphasis on 19th century romantic-style ballets, with a small proportion of modern works, both kinds exploiting almost every degree of talent that the company possesses.

There are doubtless many balletgoers, particularly of the Old Guard, for whom there can never be too many *Giselle's*, *Swan Lake's*, *Coppelia's*, *Sleeping Beauty's*; these may be identified as the type of follower who goes to see the ballerina, not the ballet. For them, the interest of the performance lies solely in *what* the ballerina does and *how well* (or otherwise) she does it; whether the ballet is in itself an honestly satisfying theatrical experience is a question that never occurs to them. They are devoted, sincere, and probably spend more than they can afford on balletgoing; without them the audiences would be appreciably thinner. If they were the only kind of people interested in Ballet, then Ballet would have died years ago.

The balanced attitude, the mature point-of-view, lies with those who see in the "classical" ballets a means of measuring every degree of the talent of all the dancers—not simply the ballerinas: they are the ones who want and encourage new ballets, not only for the performing opportunities they give their casts, but because they indicate the state of the art of Ballet; an art which, like all others, can only keep alive if new works are constantly being made. Even bad new ballets are better than no new ballets at all.

It is a fact, and it has been a very obvious fact in some recent performances, that good ballets can be superlatively, and also quite badly, danced, and that poor ballets can be made into exciting experiences through splendid interpretations. But it would be a healthier sign for Ballet altogether if there were a consistently high level of performance from the entire cast (from ballerina down to the latest recruit in the back line of the corps-de-ballet) instead of the erratic level of performance—if one judges the dancing of every part in a whole programme—that has marked much of this present season at Covent Garden.

There is not the slightest doubt that this remarkable variation in performance-quality is due to the simple facts that—owing to the size of the repertoire: the number of classical ballets performed: the limited number of orchestral rehearsals: the incomplete way in which many newcomers to certain roles are rehearsed: the actual number of hours dancing per week performed by *everyone* except the top rank ballerinas—the season is far too strenuous a commitment

for the company.

One of the historical curiosities about the Sadler's Wells Ballet (among many curious facets, some of them very admirable, in its history and activities) is that for years on end it has danced more actual performances of Ballet than any other ballet company ever seen on the face of the earth . . . Think hard on what that means in terms of work, training, classes, rest, recuperation, and also in terms of cash, glory, ambition and health, for every dancer involved; then draw your own conclusions.

Of the latest try-outs in leading roles, the most significant have been those of Anya Linden in *Cinderella*, of Svetlana Beriosova in *Swan Lake*, and of David Blair in a number of roles. Miss Linden gave a coherent and on the whole touching rendering of her role; she had obviously studied it carefully, she had ideas of her own about the ways in which a browbeaten, neglected young girl would react in the circumstances shown in the story of *Cinderella*. As with all similar roles in major ballets, whether ancient or modern, the newcomer faces two distinct problems and whether she is deliberately made aware of them or simply feels them acting on her subconsciously, she shows her struggle with these problems very acutely in the first—and probably several subsequent—performances.

The first problem might be called the "Number One Apprentice Ballerina Test", and it is that of projecting two quite different aspects of herself—one through the dancing, the other through the acting. Only the "arrived" ballerina has satisfactorily solved this problem: its solution is wrapped up in what the beholder calls Style. "Number Two Apprentice Ballerina Test" is the ability to carry off the first test without either deliberately or subconsciously modelling her behaviour in the role on the interpretation of the greater dancer who has preceded her. Again, only enough experience enables her to override this difficulty. Both Miss Linden, and Miss Beriosova in *Swan Lake*, revealed their awareness of these problems; each showed it, but only, I thought, in a fairly negligible way.

Each of them has obvious potential as a unique performer of this sort of role, with Miss Beriosova holding the advantage of a few years, a vaster experience, and a very different background of training and early performances. Miss Linden betrays too easily a nervousness which she very properly feels, and at times it spills over into her conscious self, blurring what should be the fine line, the effortless flow of movement-pattern, the suggestion of completeness in every gesture. But each in different ways gave genuinely exciting renderings, and their subsequent performances cannot fail to show progress, deeper assurance, fuller control over both the dance material and the characterisation technique.

Everyone knows of the Company's anniversary falling on May 5th; for this 25th birthday Ashton compounded what was quite deliber-

ately entitled a *piece d'occasion* (with its suggestion of impermanence). This was *Birthday Offering* which—at this moment of writing, between its first and second scheduled performances—seems likely to be for Mr. Ashton a splendid triumph or a wry dose of irony. It is in itself certainly the former; and for him it may turn into the latter, if it is treated as only an occasional piece.

I have no knowledge of what pains it cost its creator, whether it absorbed him as deeply as, say, *La Péri*, or *Rinaldo* and *Armida*, or even *Romeo and Juliet*; the fact is, that it proves to be just about the finest piece of pure dance composition ever to flow out of his imagination. It would be an undeserved set-back to his *amour propre* if the company's policy were to relegate it to the storeroom and wardrobe after this birthday celebration.

Seven leading dancers, male and female, are exploited cleverly: the males all in unison, Michael Somes in an excellent pas-de-deux with Margot Fonteyn, and each of the females in solo. The shape is that of a divertissement, with grand entrée, variations, pas-de-deux, male ensemble, and the seven brilliant solos each one cunningly (and, one hopes, lovingly) sculptured out of the personality of its dancer.

The fact that fine dancing finely rendered can overcome poverty of either decor, dress and music was well proved here; the decor was good and simple, the costumes nearly every way perfect: the music was an assembly of absolutely typical pieces out of various works of Glazounov (including a part of his once famous ballet, *The Seasons*)—it sounded like super-Palm-Court and, if accompanied by less magnificent dancing, would have been a positive misery to endure.

Les Ballets de Paris de Roland Petit opened a short season at the Palace Theatre on May 8th, with a single programme of two old and two new ballets. *Carmen* and *Le Loup* are well known to London, the former possibly the best example of M. Petit's intensely personal style as a choreographer; the latter a fairly recent work whose drama of a wolf loved by a woman doesn't quite add up to the *grand guignol* episode it ought to be.

The new ballets, *La Chambre* and *Les Belles Damnées*, simply show the extent to which M. Petit's talent has by now thinned out; the choreography exploits the usual limited range of steps and gestures, the situations have been used before in Petit's ballets, and the novel music and startling decor do not add up to a sufficiently vital contribution. Balletically, these pieces are saying the same thing to us as was said in *Le jeune homme et la mort* and *L'oeuf à la coque*. One does not complain that a choreographer seems to repeat himself—most of them, after all, do work for years with a fairly limited group of ideas—but one expects to find new ways of using the old choreographic tricks, for this is what justifies the continued use of the same basic situations, the same set of characters, in a succession of ballets.

La chambre is a miniature murder-mystery; we see a man die in agony, the police enter and question the other lodgers and the chief officer remains. He feels the power of an intrusive atmosphere and struggles against it; when the curtain is drawn a strange woman steps in from the balcony, she dances with him, overpowers him, stabs him and departs. . . he writhes about, then dies exactly as the first victim did. Now we know who killed: but why? and the "why" would not matter if the characters and the situation were dramatically powerful. They fail to be this because the choreography neither explains nor illuminates the people and the situation; it is simply a framework of movement, a series of acrobatic and erotic jumps, writhings, embraces. *Les belles damnées* might be a joke if it lasted for five minutes, as a notion in the Folies Bergère revue; imps and light ladies in the entrance-hall of Hell spend the time in exploiting comic and grotesque movements but to no particular point. It could be saved if done throughout with brilliant style, but a lot of it is scrappy, shapeless and unoriginal.

But the dancing of Veronika Mlakar and Buzz Miller in *La chambre* is truly sensational if basically unrelated to true ballet, and Violette Verdy brings grace, style and a true theatrical personality into all her dancing, whether dramatic or comic.

REVIEW

DANCERS IN BURLINGTON HOUSE SUMMER EXHIBITION 1956

ONE Publicity Office has clearly done a good job of work, in getting two examples of their ballerina at the Royal Academy show—an over-life size gilded bronze, and a painting. You will by now have seen these portrayed in all the Sunday papers; you can see the originals any Sunday—2 p.m. to 6 p.m., for 2/6d. The figure of Fonteyn is *sur les pointes*—you may say in preparation for fouetté, or at the end in full balance, as the muscles are relaxed. And the bronze has the best position in the galleries. The painting by the Florentine artist, Pietro Annigoni, proves him to take position as the 20th century Winterhalter, though he admits these "society pictures" are for him a newer phase. He does them well.

Maurice Lambert, sculptor of the bronze (and brother of the late Constant Lambert), has had a recurrent problem. Degas made the tutu for his "girl dancer" with real cotton: it didn't look so good. The charming figure of Marina Semyonova, Soviet ballerina, was allowed to retain the tutu in the solid clay of the original, turned to bronze; and is the only defect, in its heaviness of texture. Lambert has used skilfully cut sections of perforated zinc, gilded over. In the distance, this effect is fair, but not good enough. Years back, on an air-station scrap-heap, I saw some delightful screens of thin polished copper gauze—it looked like burnished silk in the sunshine. Enquiry showed it to be a woven wire gauze, used also for separating petrol from water. This material looks like enhanced tarlatan; far better in gloss than Dresden porcelain.

My *primero fuelle* (*Columna Cinco*) reports a rumour, from research in cellars of British Council (seeking unlicensed scriptures) that a copy of this bronze is to go to USA for exhibiton and possible sale. Duplication is technically quite easy. But let us hope what an American declared to be "a too-too high tutu" will be modified.

Before I note other art works connected with dance, let me repeat Sir Alfred Munnings' quadrature on critics (with picture of them) as he comments on Teddy Boy Art—and some in the show. He writes (p. 25, *Catalogue*)

"Does the Subject Matter?"

"And why not purchased for the State?"

"The State, alas, has come too late."

"Because the subject's so profound

"'Twas sold for twenty thousand pound!"

Here my only remarks are: See this picture of the critics; and see the next picture, which is "*Still Life with a Jar of Pickled Onions*." Oh! St. Halitosis! Those of you who listened to the BBC's report of the "Dinner" will recall (regretfully, as one may think) that no diner was pickled on this auspicious occasion—at least not audibly to waiting Britain.

We have had Teddy Boy Ballets—as *Gorbals* or *Carmen*—but here are no Teddy Boy dancers. They are all most decorous. I noted Dora Gordine's dark bronze statuette *Demi-Plié Fifth Position*; and a charming dancing pose called *Music* by T. B. H. Jones; a poster-like super-portrait of *Laurence Olivier as Macbeth* by R. Spear, competing with portraits of condemned meat, or "*Fresh Haddock*." Stephen Spurrier's varied pictures of theatre incline usually to circus scenes—one, *Limbering Up*, is not dance. There is *Costume Fitting Old Vic* (C. Ironside), but more military than balletic. A dancing bear is a charming pottery figure, *Bear Leader* by S. Reychan; and a *Harlequin* by Mrs. Cherniavsky is attractive. Other notable theatrical exhibits include medallions of *Sybil Thorndyke* and *Dr. Vaughan Williams* (F. Kovacs); portraits of Harley Granville Barker (D. McFall) and Sir Kenneth Barnes (C. Dane), and *Jill Balcon* (F. Belsky). Laura Knight has no theatre pictures.

Smaller works include *Jam Session* (Jazz at work) (L. Taylor); *The Dance*, (R. Brill); *Dancers and Orchestra*—but Negroes, perhaps New Orleans (W. F. Gall) and, surprisingly, *Theatre Queue* (M. Milnes), and the *Terrace at Monte Carlo* (C. Cundall).

My final commendation, to one enterprising producer (if any) is to see works by John Sewell, whose three paintings prove a sense of colour much needed in our stage decoration. In general, this R. A. show is lacking in real expression and control of colour; there are far too many "grey" paintings without light. And while there is overwhelming proof of expert craftsmanship, there is a general absence of ideas and genuine creative imagination—as in our ballets.

And that, with the incessant array of ideas available around us, day after day, for new ballets with modern (or ancient) themes, seems a pity.

W. G. RAFFÉ

TELEVISION and the DANCE

IT is no secret that the Dance is the Cinderella of French T.V. Since T.V. gained a hold with the French public, a few deserving efforts have been made to give the Dance a place in it. At one time Jean Benoit Levy made some short films devoted entirely to the Ballet, with the assistance of well-known choreographic figures—Janine Charrat, Jean Guélin etc. The result of these labours was, disappointing; the 300,000 French viewers were not enthusiastic. It may have been concluded from this that there were no balletomanes amongst the viewers, but we think we may say that that is not altogether the problem.

Two aspects of the difficulty may be more easy to examine here in the light of some small but successful experiments which we have recently witnessed. For that reason we shall spend some time over three dance films which only last five minutes each.

Pile ou Face (Heads or tails)—This is the title of a sort of televised magazine, dealing with half-a-dozen varied items, lasting five minutes each. The programme is meant for 12-20 year-olds—that is to say that part of the public which has the quickest reactions; which does not hesitate to write in its opinions, however violent. Behind this youthful public there may be discerned the psychology of its parents and the sort of education it has received from them.

The "male body" of viewers has a horror of the dance. That is because its parents hold this art (largely unknown to them) to be a secondary form of diversion, wholly feminine, or, so far as the male artists are concerned, effeminate. It is also, because balletomanes of all ages are completely disinterested in the Dance on Television; they prefer to have direct visual contact with their favourite artistes but above all they want to see *all* of a dancer. They reproach Television (and the cinema) with taking them for a walk through an imaginary theatre, as well as making them take part in activities they do not always approve of (in France, alas! one comes to see the dancers and not the ballets); one's attention is necessarily fixed on the expression of the face, on an epaulement, a play of the legs—on details which the viewers often think are less important than the whole.

William Magnin has been strong enough to go against public opinion. As Director of *Pile ou Face* he might easily have struck the Dance out of his pre-occupations; but instead he has devoted himself to revealing its beauties to young

FRANCE

French audiences. In this he has had the collaboration of Jean Corelli choreographer and balletmaster, and a passionate follower of Television and the Cinema, possessed of a keen comprehension of the limitations

of their techniques and of their occasional opposition to choreographic concepts.

Youthful audiences can be attracted by the sportive side of the Dance, while still showing them that the Dance is more

Two young stars from the Paris Opera as they appeared on English Television.

Christine Vaussard and Jean Paul Andreani in Ballet en Bleu.

Exclusive Ballet Today photo by Mike Davis.



by
JEAN COQUELLE

than a sport. But to attract the general television public must be the goal of producers of dance programmes; for that, artistic quality is of course essential, but it is even more important to destroy the reputation for frivolity which has attached to the Art since the days of the "Ladies of the Opera", when dancing was mixed up with more carnal considerations and betrayed itself into stupid 'divertissements'. In this respect we are half a century behind the English public.

Reverting to the three dance films with which we are concerned the first was an extract from Georges Skibine's *Prisoner of the Caucasus* chosen for its sense of anxiety and its "sporting" content. Carefully chosen bits of slow motion demonstrated the difficulties of such things as turns in the air—and at this point we should pay homage to Daniel Seillier, where precision proved the points.

The second film, *The Blue Bird* magnificently danced by Beatrice Consuelo and Daniel Seillier (both soloists of the Cuevas Ballet) altered the physical qualities of dancing to pure artistic beauty. Here the virtuosity of the camera underlined that of the artists, and the choreographic arrangement, while necessarily changing the range of movement, retained the actual steps and marked the feeling of the pas de deux (enchanted Princess and the Bird), in spite of the poor costuming which spoiled the visual characterisation.

The third and last film is *First Steps*. Developing the idea of the attempts by boys (who had accepted the first two films) to dance for themselves. Jean Corelli has created a little humorous ballet, which shows the difficulties and clumsiness of all beginners. Marie-Claire Carrié partnered by Corelli himself was a delicious and lively interpreter.

But these films, intended to teach viewers to appreciate the artistic values of the Dance, unfortunately stand alone. Because of the economic difficulties of Television and in spite of the meagre recompense of the artists—Ballet remains one of the dearest, while one of the shortest, entertainments.

It is for public opinion to overcome its prejudice against the Dance on television and for Television itself to cure the viewer's prejudices about the Dance in general. That is going to be difficult but we must not despair; one day, we may be as fortunate as are English viewers. But to have that good fortune, we must first deserve it.

An Exclusive

Ballet Today

Interview

Roland Petit

Pictured below

Roland Petit

and his wife

Renée Jeanmaire

in Carmen

THE fresh approach which Roland Petit brings to his creations is undoubtedly one of the most significant factors in modern ballet. Consequently it is a stimulating experience to have the privilege of discussing his methods with him.

He takes a delight in shattering preconceived notions. He can be anything but orthodox, much as he insists upon a basically sound technique. He has little patience with the view that rules are made to be followed blindly—yet all his departures from time-honoured practice demonstrate a compelling logic and a real respect for tradition. Boiled down, his principles can be stated in a few words: "Tradition first. Soak yourself in tradition. Then throw the formula overboard!"

In the first place, he by no means subscribes to the theory that ballet should necessarily start off with a story. Nor does he usually choose to make the music his starting point. He is not at all dogmatic about this; but one thing he does insist upon is that all new works *should* spring from new ideas.

"I have hundreds of ideas," he said. "Of course, they are not always fruitful. Lots and lots of them have to be discarded. Even when they are used, their success is not inevitably a foregone conclusion. I cannot claim to have produced nothing but *good ballets*," he added with a wry smile, underlining that touch of acrid humour which is characteristic of him, both as a personality and as a creator. But he is so vital, so aflame with the divine spark of creative energy that one gets the impression a few ideas misfiring now and then are matters of no great importance. There are plenty of others where they came from! He rises resilient from every set-back.

"When creating a ballet, I do not believe in tying myself hand and foot to a set plan," he said. "It seems to me there can be too much thinking and planning! I prefer to let ideas develop along their own lines—letting them grow, in other words. It is like sowing seeds. The gardener cannot push up the seeds he sows; he must let them take their own time to germinate under the ground. And even when they sprout, he can do little more than keep them well watered, or provide a prop if the tender plant needs support. Weeding, thinning-out, pruning—these come later, and they are vitally important. But first the plant must have its chance. Only if it is a good, strong plant can it be allowed to survive. With ideas for ballet it is exactly the same."

"Naturally, in my creative work, I depend very much upon the individual qualities of my artists. All have their own strong points, their specialties; and these inspire me. I try to use their superlative gifts to the maximum advantage, and very often that has a decisive influence on the final form the ballet takes."

I asked Monsieur Petit if he had any pupils specially trained as "material" for the realisation of his ideas.

"If you mean a school, no," he replied. "I do not take pupils. But of course I am always interested in young talent, and when I find a dancer with a special aptitude, it naturally interests me to bring out that budding talent to the full. In the process it may seem that I am breaking with tradition, but that is more apparent than real. I am a great admirer of the pure classic tradition. At the same time, I realise that it is about as archaic for a modern choreographer to express himself in this idiom as it would be for a modern writer to frame his thoughts in the sonorous long sentences of Gibbon or Samuel Johnson. It simply does not conform to present-day conditions."

As regards framework material—that is to say, stories—here, Monsieur Petit maintains, there is literally "nothing new under the sun". All stories can be rendered down to a few basic elements on which the changes are rung in an infinite number of variations. "If you want to know my real opinion, I think the Bible is one of the most inexhaustible mines of story material," he said.

"Of course, everything depends on the treatment, and this is where individual judgment comes in," he continued. "If a ballet is frankly a 'period piece', it must bear out the 'feeling' of the age it represents. And there you have in a nutshell the essence of tradition. When a ballet is modern, both in substance and intention, the treatment can be more adventurous, though even here the eternal verities on which all Art is based must never be discarded."

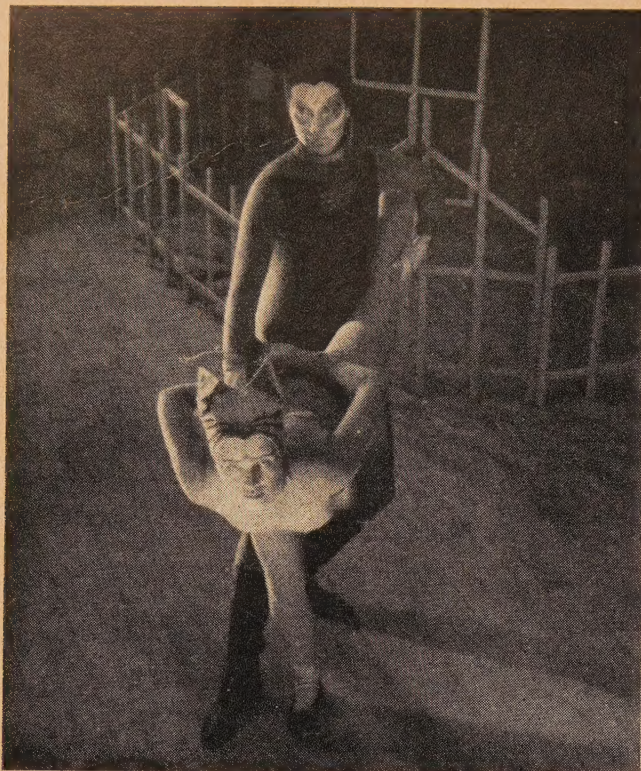
"The great secret is to cut out non-essentials. Eliminate, speed up, condense. To be able to tell a story which would normally take three hours in the space of forty-five minutes—that is the modern aim. Personally, I hate a literary digest, but I realise that life is short, so one has to make terms with it, and concentrate on high lights; hence the digest has its uses, and that applies to our entertainment also."

For the choreographer, a sense of the theatre is of primary importance, and Monsieur Petit possesses this in a marked degree. He believes in shock-tactics.

"There is the shock of music, the shock of step, the shock of light," he says, "and all of them can combine to work upon the imagination of the audience, stimulating it to co-operate actively with the choreographer's creative aims." It is rather like the work of an extremely competent draftsman, who can indicate a figure with half-a-dozen telling lines, making even the blank spaces eloquent by their exact position and balance in the design. The art lies more in that which is left out, than in the outlined indications. But it requires a supremely great artist to do the pruning!

"I am not a fanatic," said Monsieur Petit. "I do not like ballet when it is treated as a sort of religion. Which is altogether a different thing from treating it with proper seriousness. I first conceive a feeling deep in the heart . . . then I explore . . ."





GUATEMALA

SIX months ago Denis Carey, the Irish dancer and maitre de ballet, was appointed maitre de ballet of the Guatemala City Ballet after several years of experience in similar work in various cities in Holland and Germany. After a period in which he concentrated on teaching to bring up the technical standard, he began work on a programme of ballet which he staged at the beginning of February. This included a theatrically presented *History of the Classical Ballet* which combined entertainment with an introduction to ballet traditions very useful in a country where ballet has only recently taken root. The other item in the programme consisted of his own version of *Peter and the Wolf*.

In March he created a new ballet *Don Juan* to music by Gluck, originally staged by Angiolini in Vienna in 1761. This ballet played a great role in the evolution of the art of ballet giving rise to a violent controversy between Noverre and Angiolini as to whether it was in fact the first ballet reviving the Graeco-Roman art of pantomime. The theme was very well suited to a country with Spanish cultural traditions, for the legend of Don Juan has had a tremendous appeal to Spaniards ever

since Tirso de Molina wrote the first play with this theme some three hundred years ago. The audience of 1,000 included about 300 illiterate Indians, and the performance began in a familiar atmosphere of disorder. But as soon as *Don Juan* began there was dead silence, and the audience burst into applause after the duel scene—something very rare in Guatemala, where three curtains at the end of a performance signifies a triumph. *Don Juan* was a triumph by Guatemalan standards; the press was very complimentary, and one critic even went so far as to describe the ballet as a masterpiece.

Denis Carey was in fact compelled by the technical limitations of his artists to make his effects through good dramatic construction rather than by brilliant dancing. In order to show Don Juan's dual personality he had this part danced by two men. One was the classical rake of Molina and Molière; the other was the romantic idealist of Zorilla and Byron, the sadistic perfectionist who devotes his life to the search for a woman who does not and cannot exist. On the female side he followed Da Ponte (the librettist of the Mozart opera *Don Giovanni*) in introducing

AMERICA

WINTER AND EARLY SPRING IN CHICAGO.

A great variety of dance entertainment was seen in Chicago during the first quarter of 1956. There was the definitely national art of Tanec, a Yugoslav folk ballet troupe, and of the Kabuki Dancers and Musicians from Japan, as well as the more international style (though not necessarily more universal appeal) of Alexandra Danilova and associates, Ballet Theatre, Marcel Marceau and New York City Ballet's *Nutcracker*.

THE *Great Moments of Ballet* programme, presented at the amusing Eighth Street Theatre, displayed four dancers: Danilova, Roman Jasinsky, Moscelyne Larkin and Michael Maule. Despite the considerable range of the respective talents, their limitations would have been more prudently observed within a regular ballet company.

BALLET Theatre's one week at the Civic Opera House was uneven. Depending on the particular performance or performances attended, one could come away with the impression that this was a really wonderful or a rather dull troupe. Rosella Hightower, who had not been well received at Ravinia Park last summer, started this season with a silly, flirtatious *Swan Lake*, but redeemed her reputation in all of her other roles. If in Nora Kaye, Ballet Theatre has "the Duse of the Dance", then in Hightower it has "ballet's Tallulah Bankhead".

As last year, Ballet Theatre had no new ballets, but Anthony Tudor revived his masterpieces, *Lilac Garden* and *Pillar of Fire*, and *Dim Lustre* which was seen for the first time by many in the audience. Choreographed to Richard Strauss' *Burlesque*, the ballet contains moments of masterly waltzing and visually might be a predecessor of Balanchine's *La Valse*. Dramatically, *Dim Lustre* suffers from an unsuitable

use of the flash-back technique and a coy ending.

In all of his ballets, I was impressed by Tudor's ability to invent fantastic lifts which usually climax a series of simple dance patterns. Like the limpid lifts of Russia's Lavrovsky, Tudor's are not used for their own sake or as lyric arrests but always to increase the dramatic impact. Joseph Levine's orchestra was outstanding this season. In many ways it was the real star performer in the Tudor ballets.

AS a creator of ballets, George Balanchine is known for his highly inventive and intricate choreography, not for his ability to stage spectacles, dramatic pantomimes or character dances. This reputation was reversed when for three weeks at the Civic Opera House, NYC Ballet danced his two act *Nutcracker*.

Recalling other versions of the ballet (in particular Franklin and Slavenska's elegant, pocket edition and Ashton's wonderful dances for Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet's too chi-chi production), Balanchine's choreography, which is mostly for the second act *Land of Sweets*, is uninteresting. Especially the grand pas de deux for the Sugar plum Fairy and her cavalier, disappoints; only the Dewdrop Fairy's variation in the Waltz of Flowers captures the imagination. The first act birthday party, almost exclusively spectacle and pantomime, is a great success.

The psychological undertones of the pantomime recall Balanchine's other ballets rather than the brilliant Gothic grotesques of E. T. A. Hoffmann, on whose story this ballet is based. Hoffmann's constant sexual themes were adolescent, Balanchine's are juvenile and therefore appropriate in this quintessence of baby face theatre.

GEORGE JACKSON

BALLET IN GUATEMALA (Contd.)

three women: a peasant, a beautiful coquette, and a sad and respectable Dona Ana. The device of making Don Juan a double role was useful in making the most of the talents of the two leading male soloists, and at the same time provided some exciting choreographic possibilities.

Denis Carey has been very gratified with the technical and artistic progress of the dancers

in the company in recent months. He has to work nearly 24 hours a day, and has great difficulties with such matters as costumes and ballet shoes; but in compensation he has some of the most magnificent scenery in the world: stupendous green volcanic mountains, great lakes, and only two hours away the Pacific coast with palm trees and black sand.

FERNAU HALL

Above: Sietzke de Jongh and Tono Crespo in *Don Juan*

LIKE any ballet loving community Munich, too, has done homage to Anna Pavlova this year. Under the sponsorship of the Freunde des Balletts there was a matinée meeting, at Studio Fink with Max Niehaus showing rare slides of Pavlova, the pas de deux of *Nutcracker* danced by soloists of the State Opera and the music of *The Swan*. Prof. Dr. Fedor Stepun—a native son of Russia and a contemporary of the great Anna—gave a vivid lecture on the cultural situation of Russia at the turn of the century which resulted in Fokine's and Pavlova's appearance.

On March 2nd, 1956, Alan Carter launched a new ballet—*Les Parapluies*. The same night *Giselle* was introduced into the Munich State Opera's repertoire. *Les Parapluies*—a harmless charming little story of a spring day with and without rain—except for a swift, agile pas de deux (excellently performed by Natascha Trofimowa and Franz Baur) did not quite catch on due to its over-length and the too intricate choreography which calls for a more able corps de ballet. *Giselle* proved to be a successful key to the audience in spite of a very definite lack of ballet tradition in Germany. Irene Skorik (Munich audience's favourite) as guest ballerina (*Giselle*), Joan Harris (*Myrtha*) and Heino Hallhuber (*Albrecht*) shone equally through technical and artistic brilliance. The ballet has been advanced a great deal by the surrealist decor (Fabius Gugel) which for the romantic plot used modern man's approach to the supernatural. Since Skorik has been disabled by an accident Annette Chappell has been appearing in the role of *Giselle*.

The Freunde des Balletts on March 14, 1956, led a public

GERMANY

LES PARAPLUIES

Photo : Rudolf Betz



discussion on the ballet premières giving ballet critics, artists and choreographer equally a chance to meet their audience via public forum.

Rising popularity of ballet in Germany resulted in a new ballet movie which was turned out by the film industry in late March this year : *Roses for Bettina*. The movie only is worth while seeing

for Alan Carter's version (how many are there now ?) of *Bolero*—dynamic, full of vitality, and without break reaching the climax for which the score asks.

On April 12-14, greatly applauded, Roland Petit with his ensemble appeared in the Munich Gartnerplatz Theatre. With him were Violette Verdy, Veronika Mlakar, Buzz Miller and a

small ensemble showing an astonishingly fit group of male dancers. The pieces staged were varied (*Les Belles Damnées*, *La Chambre*, *Deuil en 24 Heures*, *Le Loup*, *Carmen*)—the appreciation was unanimous.

The society Freunde des Balletts is making headway steadily.

WILFRIED HOFMANN

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MONTE CARLO

THE Monaco Wedding is now but a memory of brilliant ceremonial and lavish entertainment, both for privileged guests and the Monegasque population. Ballet almost filled the bill at the evening festivities, Rainier III showing in unmistakable manner his love of the art. It is no secret that the Prince's will in matters affecting his marriage has been absolute and it is upon his invitation that so many of the world's great dancers have been seen here.

On April 15th a Gala Dinner was offered to the Prince and Miss Kelly in the Winter Casino, which had been transformed into a 17th Century setting drawn from Versailles. A suite of ballets, after masters of the period, was presented in this lovely, flower-decked setting. Jean-Pierre Alban, as the Shadow of the Night, with six dancers, precedes the Princess of the Night, Tamara Tumanova. Six flowers now come to dance in honour to her. The Prince of the Sun, Vladimir Outkhomsky, in the scarlet robe of a Caesar with a golden sun as breastplate, dances a pas de deux with the Princess. The Goddess of Light, Josette Clavier, introduces the finale in which the letters R and G appear outlined in fire behind the stage.

On the evening of the 17th a Serenade to the Prince was given on the square before the Palace on Monaco Rock. After French and American bands and choirs had greeted the Prince, watching with his guests from the Palace balconies, pupils of the Besobrasova and Dubreuil Schools of Dancing gave excerpts from *Rouge et Blanc*, the Ballet given in Monte Carlo last November. London Festival followed with the colourful marriage ballet from *Esmeralda*. The densely packed Monegasques showed tumultuous appreciation, well deserved both from the excellence of the performance and the fortitude of the dancers, who, owing to the late start of the entertainment, had waited nearly an hour in their flimsy costumes in the chilly evening.

The Gala of the 18th assembled a galaxy of talent in the Salle Garnier at the Casino, providing an occasion of exceptional brilliance. The performance opened with the world première of the Ballet *Divertissement à la Cour*, music by Georges Haendel, theme by Tony Aubin, orchestration by Harty and Richard Blareau, choreography by Serge Lifar and decor by Constantin Nepo. The decor here was particularly effective, steps on the stage leading to a small stage behind which stretched a vista of the avenue at Versailles. Vignette-like scenes were danced within this frame, from which the principals came to dance two pas de deux and a solo by Chauviré, in which she beautifully portrayed her grief and jealousy when deserted by Renault, who had transferred his attentions to Vyroubova in a charming pas de deux. The Ballet was finely balanced and well conveyed the dignity and stateliness of the period.

Etudes, danced by London Festival, with Toni Lander, John Gilpin, Fleming Flindt and Kenneth Melville now followed. This well

known ballet was quite faultlessly danced with superb mastery. French critics were unanimous in the most generous praise. Gilpin and Lander seemed inspired by the occasion, admirably seconded by Flindt and Melville. The corps de ballet showed an élan and co-ordination which greatly impressed those privileged to be present. A truly great performance.

Chauviré, Vyroubova, Lafont and Amiel then danced *Variations*, Pas de Quatre, music by Franz Schubert and choreography by Lifar, with the charm and finish characteristic of the Paris Opéra.

A hush of expectation heralded the entry of the incomparable Fonteyn who, with Michael Somes, danced the Pas de Deux from Tchaikovsky's *La Belle au Bois Dormant* with effortless ease and faultless technique.

The evening closed with the new Ballet *Hommage à la Princesse*, dedicated to the new Princess and danced by London Festival. Music by Stan Kenton, choreography by Michael Charnley upon a theme by Anton Dolin and décor and costumes by André Levasseur. In five movements the ballet is designed to portray youth and gaiety. Décor is extremely simple and the costumes striking, with short scarlet or white jackets contrasting sharply with black. The curtain rises upon the men fixed in rigid attitudes from which they are only released by the touch of the girl dancing daintily between them. Then all becomes most lively and gay to music which, though modern, is never obtrusive or cacophonous. The Ballet was well received and is understood to have met with the warm approval of the princely couple.

The programme of this Gala was repeated in the open air at the Louis II Stadium on the evening of the 19th, all Monegasques having the right to apply for free tickets. This exceptional Ballet entertainment was offered to his subjects by the Prince and must surely be unique of its kind.

An honour to Ballet, and a pleasure to balletomanes present at the Reception in the Palace after the Cathedral Wedding on 19th, was the inclusion among the guests of leading members of London Festival, the ladies looking particularly charming in summery frocks.

It is at the moment uncertain if London Festival will be here next season. It would be a great disappointment to many if other engagements keep them away. The Company is firmly established in the affections of residents and regular visitors.

J. R. Farrington

Above: Divertissement à la Cour
Photographs of Homage to the Princess will be published in our next issue.

Photo: Leon Ward



The audience turn to face the Royal Box as Princess Grace and Prince Rainier enter the Theatre on their Wedding Day

GALA PERFORMANCE

held in the Salle Garnier at the Casino Monte Carlo
on April 18th, 1956.

Programme

Divertissement à la Cour

music by Georges Haendel,
theme by Tony Aubin.

Orchestration by Harty and Richard Blareau,
choreography by Serge Lifar.

Decor and costumes by Constantin Nepo.

Cast:

The dancer.....Yvette Chauviré
The favourite.....Nina Vyroubova
Louis XIV.....Serge Lifar
Première danseuse.....Josette Amiel
Premier danseur.....Raoul Bari
Corps de ballet from Opéra de Paris and
Opéra de Monté Carlo.

Etudes

danced by London Festival Ballet with
Toni Lander, John Gilpin, Fleming Flindt
and Kenneth Melville.

Variations

Pas de Quatre, music by Franz Schubert.
Choreography by Serge Lifar with Chauviré,
Vyroubova, Lafont and Amiel.

La Belle au Bois Dormant

Grand pas de deux with Margot Fonteyn
and Michael Somes.

Hommage à la Princesse

dedicated to Her Serene Highness
Princess Grace Patricia of Monaco,
danced by Festival Ballet.

Choreography by Michael Charnley upon a
theme by Anton Dolin.

Decor and costumes by André Levasseur.
Music by Stan Kenton.

A ballet in five movements:

First, Fourth and Fifth movements: Belinda
Wright, Marilyn Burr, Anita Landa
and John Gilpin.

Second movement: Marilyn Burr, Louis
Godfrey and Ronald Emblen.

Third movement: Belinda Wright and John
Gilpin.

An exclusive Ballet Today photograph by Leon Ward

The 1st performance at the Royal Opera House by the Sadler's Wells Ballet

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to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Sadler's Wells Ballet*

Music by Alexander Glazounov
Choreography by Frederick Ashton
Costumes by André Levasseur



Only a very special occasion such as this could bring seven leading ballerinas together in one ballet. The photographs on these pages were taken at rehearsal and show: left to right Svetlana Beriosova, Rowena Jackson, Elaine Fifield, Margot Fonteyn, Nadia Nerina, Violetta Elvin and Beryl Grey.

Their escorts were: Michael Somes, Alexander Grant, Brian Shaw, Philip Chatfield, David Blair, Desmond Doyle and Bryan Ashbridge.

Opposite Page: Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes.





PHILIP CHATFIELD

MEN IN BALLET

By SONIA ROBERTS

THE present season at Covent Garden, has been the busiest and most exciting in Philip Chatfield's career as a dancer. He has now inherited all John Field's roles in addition to his own, and already commended for the nobility of his Siegfried, on April 12th, he danced his first Albrecht, to Beryl Grey's *Giselle*. This is the culmination of the faith that kept him going during his long years in the corps de ballet.

"The progress of my career" he says, "has always been gradual. Every period of activity has been counterbalanced by a slack time, with nothing but the steady routine of study to enliven it. I couldn't have gone on, if I had thought, I could not get further than the corps de ballet. It was not easy, but deep down, I always believed that in the end, honest hard work would bring its rewards."

"Sometimes, I thought, if I am very lucky, Siegfried, in *Swan Lake*, might come my way, but I never expected Albrecht. This role is to dancers, all that Hamlet is to the straight actor, and the opportunity to dance this role before I am thirty, is the most important thing that has yet happened in my career."

Since he has been studying the role, Philip Chatfield's interpretation of the character of Albrecht has changed considerably. "I used to think him really a bit of a cad, but now I believe that he sincerely loves *Giselle*, and to be suddenly reminded of the unfortunate marriage already contracted for him, is a cruel stroke of fate."

Philip Chatfield's ballet career began at the age of six, with lesson from a Miss Moore who still teaches in Southampton. At the age of eleven, he won a scholarship to the Sadler's Wells School, where he found himself the only male pupil.

"This could have been a great disadvantage," he recalls, but Nicolai Sergueeff was such a wonderful teacher that I hardly noticed I had no other boy students to watch."

His first appearance with the company was while still a student and in *Casse Noisette*. He then appeared as a mouse, and later as a page to Margot Fonteyn.

At fifteen, a bout of illness put him out of ballet for a while. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, because it helped him over the awkward age for casting. Probably as a result of the advantages of home cooking, over the inferior food available in wartime London,



Photo: Houston Rogers

Philip Chatfield

during the months he was away from the theatre, he grew 'from a thin little boy to my present size.'

His present size is just over six feet tall. Although he does not find this a disadvantage in partnering, "all our ballerinas are wonderful to work with, excellent dancers and not given to temperamental outbursts" he acknowledges a special debt of gratitude to that other tall dancer, Beryl Grey. He believes that their presence in the company is helping to make things easier for other tall dancers and that this is important, because the new generation of dancers now coming into the Sadler's Wells Company are on average much taller.

"Being tall" he explains, "means that you have to take certain phrases at a slower tempo to gain the full value of the movement. You jump less readily than smaller dancers, but, and this is particularly true of a ballerina of the quality of Beryl Grey, tall dancers have a lovely natural line."

Philip Chatfield loves to dance in what he describes as ballets with mood. Under this heading, he includes *Swan Lake* and *Les Sylphides*. On days when he is to dance major roles in such ballets, he likes to be free of all appointments and have the day to himself, to go over in his mind the exact nuances of meaning the ballets require.

However, if Philip Chatfield, likes to spend some of the time with his head in the clouds, the rest he devotes to being severely practical, and after the emotional zenith of *Giselle*, came the nadir

of scrubbing the floor next morning in his newly acquired flat.

Batchelor Chatfield is looking forward to looking after himself, and from the determined way he discusses dust collecting on the cupboards he intends to be very houseproud. He is also learning to cook and is hoping to restart his collection of tropical fish, which had to be disbanded for the last American tour.

He did not enjoy the early tours of the United States, because like most of the company he felt the strain of the one night stands impaired the quality of his performances, not at the time but several months later back home in England. However now the programmes for these tours have been modified he enjoys them immensely. The best compliment he has received came from the United States, where he found audiences in the intervals were scouring their programmes to see if they could believe the evidence of their eyes, that it was the same dancer performing *Swan Lake* and the *Lady and the Fool* on one programme.

"When the *Lady and the Fool* was under discussion for production at Covent Garden," says Chatfield, "many people felt I was wrong in accepting a role so outside my usual scope." In the early days, I modelled my style on that of Alexis Rassinne, and although I hope now I have added something that is entirely my own, I have remained an almost stylised classical dancer. However, I love variety and the change that this role gives me. I have a particular affection for

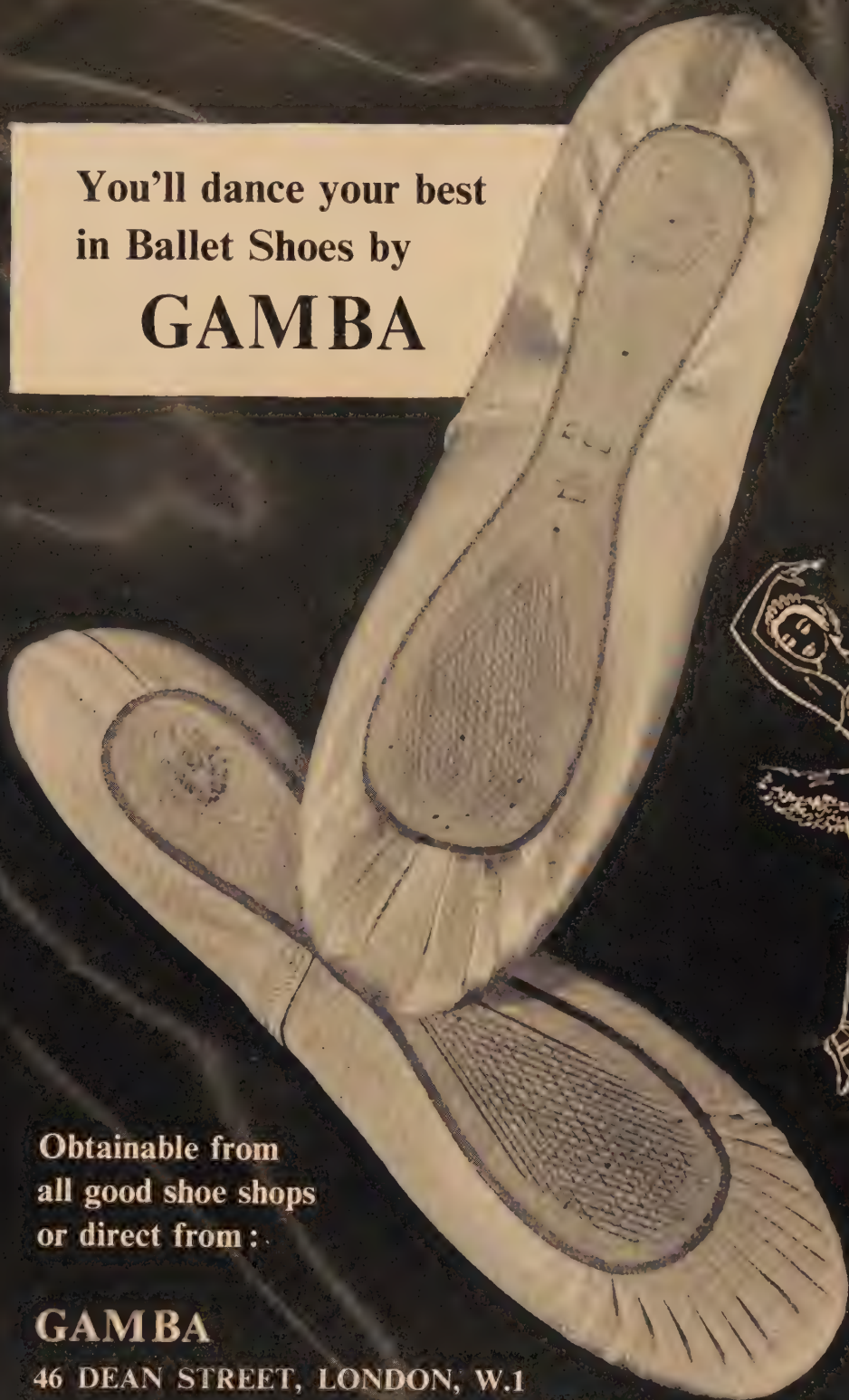
the Fool, because I feel, that he is a really three dimensional character, with thoughts and moods of his own."

Although in his teens, Philip Chatfield danced for a while with the American company Ballet Theatre, he returned to the Sadler's Wells Company when he was eighteen, and has remained with them since. His reason is that "it is a very happy company, and we are all so well looked after". "The regular Covent Garden audience, too, is one of the best in the world, because they are so sympathetic if anything should go wrong. Indeed my very first curtain call at Covent Garden, was when in the Florestan pas de trois, I twisted my foot and accidentally sat down."

Recently, Philip Chatfield appeared on T.V. He would like to do more, in this medium, despite his aversion to concrete studio floors. He stresses though, that the medium requires a different approach to theatre technique. "Movements, must be sharper and on a smaller scale than the big Covent Garden stage requires." Unlike some dancers he does not find the absence of a live audience trying. "It gives me more opportunity to concentrate on the music and anyway I remind myself that I am appearing before an audience far greater than any theatre capacity."

Philip Chatfield emphasises regular class attendance as one of the corner stones of success. Work, work, a little time off for study, and then more work is the way he likes to run his life, but he stays smiling, because to quote his own words "It has always been my ambition to be a dancer and I do not think I could be so happy doing anything else."

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PETER DAUBENY

Photo : Van Hallan

By
MONTAGUE
CALMAN

Musician
at the
Ballet

RECENTLY this young impresario brought over from Africa a team of primitive, dynamic dancers, *Les Ballets Africains de Keita Fodeba*, (Palace Theatre). We are fascinated by the cross rhythms of the native drums because for most of us there is the urge to sway to the call of the jungle beat. More seriously this visit gave us an opportunity of hearing some African music—all too little—and allowing us to discuss afterwards its general trend.

The visit was just in time, for a guitar craze sweeping across Africa now endangers the older type of music there, and it will soon be forgotten and die away. In fact the guitar's influence was already noticeably evident at the Palace Theatre.

FOLK MUSIC

True African music is not written down. It is handed down in true folk style from man to man. From district to district there is variation, in sounds and instruments. Rhythmically it is exceptionally complex. With hundreds of different scales, it is difficult to find a common denominator though there is some form of pentatonic scale. Its composition is still at sub-conscious level. That is to say, at the level of European music before the sage Pythagoras discovered scientifically the octave. The tuning is also at the sub-conscious stage. Each musician goes to endless trouble to make sure his instrument is exactly in tune.

But then what ? In tune to his own idea of the note. But as this is at sub-conscious level, there is often trouble. And if the argument in the village band is not settled, the Paramount Chief's musician says quite firmly : "*This is THE note*", and that is that. (One can foresee endless fun if the Covent Garden Opera House orchestra went back some hundreds of years, and the Royal Opera House Paramount Chief decreed that Robert Irving would state the note !)

BANGING AND BOWING

In Africa there are hundreds of instruments, usually to be played by plucking, bowing, blowing or banging. My one regret was the limited use made of the genuine African musical instruments by the visiting Company.

To many of us the music is monotonous. But let us be careful about this. The African has brought monotony to a fine art. In other words, he sings as he works, or plays : imitating his labour in the field, digging, scything and so on. All these are in themselves repetitive actions.

THE PROGRAMME

At the Palace Theatre the programme itself of *Les Ballet Africains* was not as varied as I should have liked. But whatever complaint I have, I wholeheartedly agree with Keita Fodeba when he says, "Our African dances are vital and necessary."

Fodeba opened the evening with a throbbing *Call of the Tom Tom* ; three large tom tom drums cross rhythmised in pulsating temple-throbbing beats. *The Mask Dance* was accompanied by a flamenco singer and drumming on the tom tom.

Malissadio, a song of the Sudan, was just another flamenco song, with guitar accompaniment. For *The Enian-Adje*, a ritual dance, the mystic atmosphere was dramatically evoked by the large drums. It was spine chilling.

A fascinating number was the *Toutou Diara*, with two *cora* players, Bakary and Daouda. Like a huge pumpkin in shape, the *cora* produces a variation of sounds ranging from harp-like notes, to the rattle of the castanets.

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY

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BOOKS

Reviewed by
PIGEON CROWLE

Ballet in America. By George Amberg. (The New American Library, New York, 50c.)

This exceedingly useful and informative little book—in make-up similar to the English Penguin—gives the history of ballet in America for more than a century and a half. The major part is devoted to the years during which the ballet became an expression of American life and thought, and a national style was evolved, firmly based by George Balanchine on the classical tradition. It is an absorbing story, the details of which are not sufficiently known in this country, and there are interesting parallels with the history of our own English ballet.

But the book is a reprint of one published in 1949 and it is a pity it has not been brought up to date. The years that witnessed the evolution of American ballet from Ballet Society to the New York City Ballet of international fame, are not covered. There is mention of a promising young dancer named Maria Tallchief, but as yet no hint of her gifted sister, Marjorie, or her brother-in-law George Skibine. The author is an expert who writes without bias or prejudice, and is Associate Professor in the Humanities at Minnesota University. There are twelve pages of photographs.

The Pink Ballet Slippers. By Evelyn S. Dehkes. (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.)

The plot of this book is one of never-ending appeal to young ballet goers—that of the child who, after encountering all kinds of difficulties, goes to ballet class and is brilliantly successful on the day of the important school performance. Woven into the tale are brief lessons on ballet dancing, for this is one of a series of career stories for girls.

It is fun knowing something of the technique of any art, and adds considerably to one's enjoyment as a spectator at the ballet. But if a child wishes seriously to take up ballet as a career, it would be extremely unwise for her to attempt to teach herself at home, for fear of developing faults not easy to eradicate.

The writer has a lively style and I am sure younger girls will enjoy this book.

Principals of Dance and Movement Notation. By Rudolf Laban. (Macdonald & Evans, 17s. 6d.)

Not very long ago I reviewed a book on Labanotation by Ann Hutchinson, a contributor of articles on the subject to this magazine. Now, in the English edition of one reviewed in the February 1955 number of *Ballet Today*, the originator of the system, Rudolf Laban, gives a comprehensive explanation of his method.

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THE WORLD'S VERY FIRST BALLET TO BE STAGED IN HISTORIC PAGEANT

THIS YEARS "LANDSHUT WEDDING-1475"

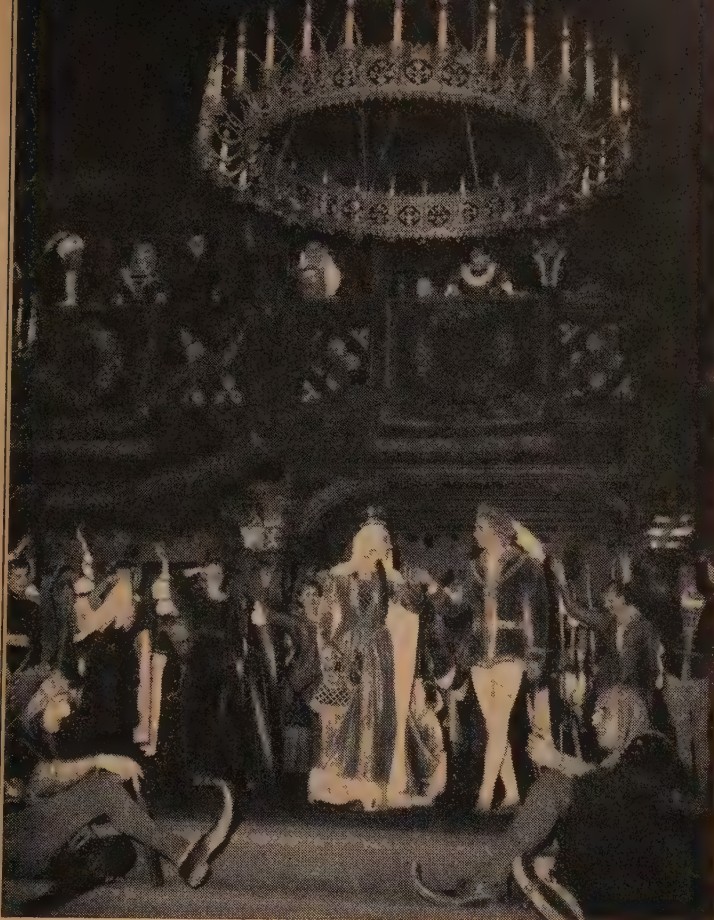
by
ELIZABETHE CORATHIEL

In an interview given exclusively to BALLET TODAY some time ago, Jan Cieplinski, the famous Polish choreographer, explained how the Kings of Poland were the first in Europe to take Ballet under their wing, making it official Court entertainment. The origin of Ballet's connection with Poland will be vividly brought to light this summer, when the celebrated Landshut Nuptials 1475 will again be re-enacted by the whole population of this picturesque Bavarian town, which lies between Regensburg and Salzburg, close to the Austrian Frontier.

Left: The magnificent 15th Century Banqueting Room of the City Hall, in which the Nuptial Ballet took place in 1475, is the scene in which it is reconstructed.

Below: Dance of the Pages in the ballet of the Landshut Wedding

Both Photographs by Peter Keetman.



NEARLY 500 years ago, the reigning Duke arranged a marriage between his heir and Princess Hedwig, daughter of King Casimir of Poland. The Landshut Dukes were famous as the richest in Europe, and Prince George was able to spend on his wedding pageantry alone a sum far greater than the dowry his bride brought with her! So magnificent was the affair that the townsfolk have kept its memory green ever since by re-enacting the proceedings in the form of a whole-day folk-festival once every five years. Since Landshut is in the American Zone of Occupation, this event has attracted enormous attention, and visitors flock from all over the world to see it, as many as 40,000 spectators lining the route of the procession. This year, the whole programme will be repeated several times, to avoid disappointment, and those who can only take their holidays in late June or July will not need to miss it.

The proceedings start in the early morning when the Bridegroom and his Knights, many of them in authentic armour, ride out to meet the Bride and her escort of Polish cavaliers. All the equipment—arms, harness, travelling coaches and so on—are absolutely authentic. A tournament takes place; then all proceed to Church (the ancient St. Martin's, in which the actual wedding took place—it is crammed with art treasures) and after a brief service, the scene moves to the City Hall, which also is the very place where the original wedding party assembled. Here a short dramatic performance traces the events leading up to the wedding, and puts the modern audience "in the picture".

We now come to the Ballet. According to the historic records, the ladies and courtiers actually staged a purely diversionary dance sequence for the first time at this famous wedding, which set a fashion, copied at other nuptial banquets. Gradually this form of entertainment took shape and the whole edifice of ballet was built up on a notion started by the Landshut Wedding.

With the increasing popularity of Ballet, the organisers of the five-yearly Landshut Wedding Festival have seen the wisdom of placing more emphasis on this aspect of it, and the reconstruction of the original Court Dance sequence is this year receiving particular attention.

From an instructional point of view, however, the whole Festival is important. The stately progress of the Pageant itself, which winds its way through the streets in the afternoon, is definitely a liberal education in deportment, traditional gestures, knightly manners and the correct wearing of authentic 15th century clothes. For this is no mere masquerade, a carnival frolic in fancy dress—the clothes, uniforms and armour worn are correct down to the least detail, and all

(Contd. on next page)



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Landshut Wedding (Contd. from previous page)

the 'characters' wear them with an inborn sense of period. In fact, all the persons taking part are historical characters, and 'type casting' is applied as strictly by the Landshut burgers as if they were actually taking part in a professional play. Casting is by election. The procession opens with hundreds of happy children, all behaving quite naturally, but already with their eye on the possibility of earning, by their outstanding talent, election at some future date to the star parts of *Prince George*, *Princess Hedwig* or the named notabilities among the wedding guests.

Since the pageant has for its background whole streets of ancient houses dating back to the 15th century, all of them beflagged and garlanded as they might have been when the wedding took place, the spectators are literally transported back into the picturesque past, and the experience is unique and memorable.

Contemporary marching music on old-world pipes and drums, the singing of appropriate old folk songs, the crying of traditional greetings, and, above all, the display of intricate ancient athletic feats, as, for instance, the skilful flag-waving ceremony with banners more than three yards long, turn the whole Pageant into a kind of continuous ballet, full of lovely movement and rich colour. The spectators themselves are caught up in the excitement. They take up their positions armed with wedding favours, small floral wreaths which they toss to their own favourites in the procession. Knights reach out with their swords and gaily catch the floral circles as they fly, with an agility which is amazing, and a joy to behold; fat burghers strain the wreaths on their belts like trophies.

After the procession, there are more festivities in the ancient City Hall; then the whole company proceeds to the Town Meadow, where an alfresco feast—much grilling of meat over open fires, much conviviality and cheerful music—goes on until the stars twinkle above the flood-lit scene.

The whole town literally turns out for this great festival, more than 5,000 characters in costume taking part, and there is nothing quite like it to be seen anywhere but in Landshut.

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NEW RECORDS

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

NAMOUNA—SUITES 1 AND 2 (LALO). *L.P.O. (Martinon)*. Decca LXT 5114.

Not much of Lalo's music is heard now-a-days but nevertheless *Namouna* has many fine pages to its credit. It is probably his most successful balletic work in spite of some rather stupid and malicious criticism by a certain section of the Press before the first night at the Paris Opéra in 1882. The choreography was by Lucien Petipa, brother of the great Marius Petipa, and partner of the famous dancer, Carlotta Grisi. The two suites are very well played and recorded, making this a welcomed addition to the ballet library.

SYMPHONY NO. 4—ITALIAN (Mendelssohn). NBC Symphony Orchestra (Toscanini) HMV. ALP1267. Philharmonia Orchestra (Cantelli). HMV. ALP1325.

I am quite sure it must have given Françoise Adret great joy choreographing her ballet, *Il Ritorno*, to the *Italian Symphony*. It is happy music, which does one's heart good to hear, and very beautiful. Toscanini has lost sight of this and is impelled by his own obsession—unremitting drive. His tempi career madly on and ultimately create a dull and uninteresting performance. The same must be said of the backing, Mendelssohn's fifth symphony—the *Reformation*. Cantelli's performance, however, is altogether a different matter. It doesn't dawdle but neither does it allow military precision to take the soul out of it. It is buoyant and free—in fact the best I have heard and the recording is excellent. Its coupling, Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, is not so successful, being marred to some extent by variation of tempo in the first movement.

PULCINELLA (Stravinsky). Cleveland Orchestra and soloists conducted by the composer. Philips ABL 3091.

The principal dancing roles of Massine's ballet were taken by Karsavina and the choreographer himself when it was first presented in 1920 at the Paris Opéra. Stravinsky was particularly pleased with the performance—everything fitted in so well with his ideas and tastes. The score (here recorded complete) is after Pergolesi, and contains some clever orchestration with vocal parts for three singers, giving it variety. Although neither the singing nor the conducting is exactly great, the sum total together with the excellent recording, is thoroughly enjoyable. You must have this disc.

COPPELIA AND SYLVIA SUITES, AND NAILA—Valse (Delibes). Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra (Boult). Nixa NCL16009.

Here are some very popular items from the ballets of Delibes. The

valse was specially composed for insertion in Adolphe Adam's opera *Le Corsaire*, when revived in 1870. It is all charming music and as it is the first Nixa record for review in these pages, it is with regret that I cannot do so favourably. Sir Adrian must, in my opinion, take the lion's share of the blame. His conducting is flabby and dull. He is riding without feeling his reins, with the result the playing of the orchestra is not clean. 'Tis pity, 'tis true.

LES PALADINS—Ballet suites 1 and 2 (Rameau). SYMPHONIES POUR LES SOUPERS DU ROY. (LaLande). Lamoureux Orchestra (Colombo). L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50106.

Rameau composed *Les Paladins* when he was an old man of seventy seven years. It was partly opera and partly ballet, and from these suites you will find that age had in no way impaired his artistry or his invention. They are both charming and lend an air of peace to our era of chaotic rush. There was all the time in the world for Louis XIV's soupers but we do not now hear much of LaLande's music. I would suggest you sample this record—it is delightfully played and very well recorded.

THE GOLDEN AGE—Suite (Shostakovitch). SOUVENIRS—Suite (Barber). Philharmonia Orchestra. (Kurtz). HMV. BLP.1080.

In 1929 a competition was held in Russia for the best ballet on the Soviet theme, and Shostakovitch's first essay in this direction found favour with the judges. After various amendments to bring it thoroughly into line with Communist teaching, it received its first performance at the Bolshoi Theatre nearly two years later. Musically it is very different from Barber's nostalgic work, *Souvenirs*, which was originally a piano duet, later orchestrated by the composer for a ballet. In each case, the performance is very good and the recording clear.

Glière's Russian Sailors' dance from *The Red Poppy*, and Mousorgsky's *Night on the Bare Mountain* (Algo's *Visions*), HMV. 7ER5060, are both well played and recorded. They will delight those who enjoy Stokowski's interpretations. Some of Lully's ballet music with Mottl's orchestration, coupled with Haydn's *Nuttorno No. 2*, receives a fairly satisfactory performance at the hands of di Bella, Telefunken TM68049, but the recording does not help—the string tone is poor. I was disappointed in *Bailes Españoles*, London WB91136, played by the Gran Orquesta de Baile. To me, it seemed completely divorced from that proud race—a partner in a teashop would be nearer the mark.

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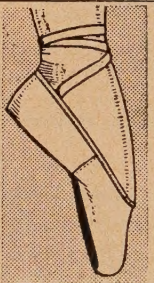
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FULL BALLET GUIDE FOR THE MONTH

COVENT GARDEN

MAY

21st (Monday)
Le Lac des Cygnes (Jackson, Somes, Park)

23rd (Wednesday)
Giselle (Nerina, Jackson, Lane, Shaw)
The Three Cornered Hat (V. Taylor Grant, White, Shaw)

26th (Saturday eve.)
Le Lac des Cygnes (Fonteyn, Somes, Lane, Page)

No matinée

29th (Tuesday)
Le Lac des Cygnes (Elvin, Blair, Linden, Lindsay)

JUNE

1st (Friday)
Scènes de Ballet
Noctambules
The Firebird (Fonteyn, Nerina, Jackson, Beriosova, Linden,

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

Wells : Somes, Ashton, Blair, Ashbridge, Burne, Doyle, Edwards, Hynd, Trecu)

5th (Tuesday)
Les Sylphides
La Péri
Mam'zelle Angot (Fonteyn, Nerina Farron, Lane, B. Taylor, Grahame : Somes, Shaw, Blair, Powell, White)
Guest Artist : Rassine

7th (Thursday)
Scenes de Ballet
Noctambules
The Firebird
(Elvin, Nerina, Beriosova, Linden, Wells : Somes, Shaw, Ashton, Ashbridge, Burne, Doyle, Edwards, Hynd, Trecu)

9th (Saturday mat.)
Le Lac des Cygnes (Fifield, Blair, Lane, Page)

9th (Saturday eve.)
Le Lac des Cygnes (Fonteyn, Somes, Linden, Lindsay)

13th (Wednesday)
Le Lac des Cygnes (Fonteyn, Somes, Lane, Page)

15th (Friday)
Le Lac des Cygnes (Nerina, Park, Grahame, Clegg)
Guest Artists : May, Rassine

21st (Thursday)
The Sleeping Beauty (Grey, Chatfield, Beriosova, Ashton, Jackson, Shaw)

22nd (Friday)
The Sleeping Beauty, (Beriosova, Somes, Drage, Powell, Linden, Blair)

23rd (Saturday mat.)
The Sleeping Beauty (Nerina, Linden, Powell, Jackson, Shaw)
Guest Artists : May, Rassine

23rd (Saturday eve.)
The Sleeping Beauty (Elvin, Blair, Lindsay, Ashton, Jackson, Shaw)
Guest Artist : May

END OF BALLET SEASON

EDINBURGH

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Sadler's Wells Ballet will be at the Festival for two weeks—August 20th to September 1.

The programme for the first week:

Noctambules,
La Péri,
The Lady and the Fool,
Coppelia.

Second week:

The Miraculous Mandarin (first performance),
Les Sylphides,
Homage to the Queen,
Coppelia Act III,
Lac des Cygnes.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET AT SADLER'S WELLS

MAY

28th
No performance

29th (Tuesday)
Blood Wedding
Blue Bird pas de deux
**Somnambulism*
Pineapple Poll
*First public performance

30th (Wednesday mat.)
No performance

30th (Wednesday eve.)
Le Lac des Cygnes Act 2
House of Birds
Les Patineurs

31st (Thursday)
The Rake's Progress
Giselle pas de deux
Somnambulism
Pineapple Poll

JUNE

1st (Friday)
Coppelia
(First London performance of new production)

2nd (Saturday mat.)
Coppelia

2nd (Saturday eve.)
Coppelia

4th (Monday)
Le Lac des Cygnes, Act 2
Blue Bird (pas de deux)
Somnambulism
The Rake's Progress

5th (Tuesday)
Le Lac des Cygnes, Act 2
Giselle, (pas de deux)
Somnambulism
Blood Wedding

6th (Wednesday Mat.)
No performance

6th (Wednesday eve.)
Les Patineurs
The Rake's Progress
Pineapple Poll

7th (Thursday)
House of Birds
**Solitaire*
Somnambulism
Dances Concertantes
* First performance

8th (Friday)
House of Birds
Solitaire
Somnambulism
Dances Concertantes

9th (Saturday mat.)
Le Lac des Cygnes, Act 2
Solitaire
Cafe des Sports

9th (Saturday eve.)
Pineapple Poll
House of Birds
Cafe des Sports

11th (Monday)
Les Patineurs
**Harlequin in April*
Solitaire
*Revival

12th (Tuesday)
Les Patineurs
House of Birds
Solitaire

13th (Wednesday mat.)
Coppelia

13th (Wednesday eve.)
Coppelia

14th (Thursday)
Blood Wedding
**Saudades*
Cafe des Sports
*First London performance

15th (Friday)
Dances Concertantes
Blood Wedding
Pineapple Poll

16th (Saturday mat.)
Coppelia

16th (Saturday eve.)
Soudades
Harlequin in April
Solitaire

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